

Cordeauxia edulis

Fabaceae (Caesalpinaceae)

Ethiopia, Somalia**COMMON NAMES:** **English:** Yeheb nut; **Somali:** Ehb, Qud, Quda.**DESCRIPTION:** A much-branched undershrub, rarely reaching 3–4 m. Red glands on stem and leaves. Very long roots tap deep water. **LEAVES:** Compound, leathery, with **1–6 pairs of leaflets**, each to 3 cm long, **oval**, the underside covered with **red glands**. **FLOWERS:** Small, yellow. **FRUIT:** Pods, 4–6 cm long **with a thin beak**. Containing 1–4 oval seeds ('nuts'), each 2–4 cm long.**ECOLOGY:** An evergreen shrub native of the Ogaden region of Ethiopia south to the Indian Ocean coast of Somalia. It was introduced at Voi and Galana in 1957 and has been cultivated in Tanzania. Drought resistant. Long roots allow the plant to tap deep soil moisture and it remains green year-round. In its native habitat the yeheb nut is found in open bush savanna, 300–1,000 m; rainfall below 400 mm. Prefers sandy and deep loam coastal soils. Agroclimatic Zones V–VI.**USES:** Firewood, edible seed, fodder (leaves), bee forage, mulch, nitrogen-fixing, soil conservation, tannin, dye (red dye from leaves used for fabrics), live fence, detergent.**PROPAGATION:** Direct sowing at site, cuttings; self-seeding when established. Early development of a deep taproot makes seedling production in nurseries less feasible.**SEED:** Before an age of 3 years a young plant may bear a few pods, but once 3–4 years old it will yield prolifically under good conditions; 300 seeds per kg. Good germination; over 80% when fresh.**treatment:** Not necessary.**storage:** Seeds are very susceptible to insect attack and lose viability quickly. Avoid long storage.**MANAGEMENT:** Slow growing during the initial stages while establishing its massive root system; young seedlings develop a strong taproot before shoots. Coppicing.**REMARKS:** Used to be a common shrub in Somalia, used as food (nuts) by nomads; now rare due to over-exploitation during famine. Seedlings are grown at Kibwezi and Voi. Seed is edible when raw, boiled or roasted and is appreciated a great deal by pastoralists. An important dry-season fodder plant and a source of fuelwood.**FURTHER READING:** <http://www.worldagroforestrycentre.org/Sites/TreeDBS/AFT/AFT.htm>; Bekele-Tesemma et al., 1993; Maundu et al., 1999; Mbuya et al., 1994; National Academy of Sciences, 1979.